



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

AN UNKNOWN KHAZAR DOCUMENT¹

BY S. SCHECHTER, Jewish Theological Seminary of
America

INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most interesting episodes in Jewish history is the story of the conversion of the Khazars to the faith of Israel, which, according to some authorities, took place some time about the middle of the eighth century, according to others, early in the first half of the seventh century. Important, however, as the event was, it left very few traces in mediæval Jewish literature. The references to it are rare, casual and short; and it is safe to say that, but for the famous Dialogue of R. Judah Halevi, known under the title of the "Book Kuzari" (ספר הכוזרי), the very name Khazar would have disappeared from the pages of Jewish annals. But the "Kuzari" is so overwhelmingly theological in its contents, that the few sentences of an historical nature hardly left any impression upon the mind of the student. In this way it came about that even the meager facts recorded there by R. Judah Halevi of the country of the Khazars, such as their independence as a nation, their search after a religion and their final conversion to Judaism were

¹ Full lists of authorities on the subject are given both in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* at the end of the article Chazars and Khazars respectively.

heeded only by a few, and even these few were not agreed as to the authenticity of the story on which the Dialogue is based, some thinking it a mere fiction, serving as a background for the *dramatis personae* engaged in the disputation.

It was only in the sixteenth century when Isaac b. Abraham Akrish, known as a collector and publisher of books, recovered in his travels between Constantinople and Egypt (?) the correspondence between Ḥasdai Ibn Shaprut, minister at the court of Abdulrahman III, caliph of Cordova, and Joseph, the king of the Khazars, that the kingdom of the Khazars was transferred from the region of fable to that of fact. This correspondence not only contained the story of the conversion of a whole kingdom to the creed of Judaism (which interested Ibn Shaprut most), but offered also a great deal of information as to the origin of the Khazars, their ethnological pedigree, the geographical position of their country, their feuds with the neighboring tribes, and their diplomatic relations with the larger powers then dominant. The scepticism of some scholars still continued for a time, but it nearly disappeared through subsequent researches in various ancient chronicles and books of travel, (especially those coming from Arabic sources) revealing a large mass of material unknown or unnoticed before, and confirming more or less the account brought to light by the discovery of Akrish.² Thus, at last, the Khazars have come into their own; room has been made for their country in all historical maps,

² Menahem Man in his *שארית ישראל*, ch. 10, which deals with Khazar history, speaks of *רש שרייבן פֿון די ערביים*. The Hebrew translation has here *חכמי האומות*. Has Man really had access to Arabic sources? About the attitude of the various scholars in different ages towards this correspondence, see Harkavy, *Russische Revue*, vol. XI, p. 143, seq. In the following notes we shall quote this periodical as R. R.

whilst accounts are given of their origin, their conversion, and ultimate disappearance from the stage of history in almost every encyclopedia or mediæval history having any claim to completeness.

The discovery of Akrish, forming the only Hebrew source of the history of the Khazars, was made accessible to the world by him in his work (קול מבשר), published at Constantinople in 1577. It was then reprinted separately, but more frequently together with the "Kuzari," representing a sort of prologue to the theological dialogue following it. A new edition of a part of this correspondence, the answer of the king of the Khazars to Shaprut, offering sometimes better readings and in some cases new matter, particularly in its geographical parts, was published by Dr. Harkavy in the periodical, מאסף נדחים ("Measeph Nida-him"), No. 8, from a St. Petersburg MS., brought by Firkovitsch from Egypt, while he gave also a full German translation of it, with critical notes, in the sixth volume of the *Russische Revue*, pp. 69-97. The Orient and especially Egypt having thus far proved the most important source of material bearing on the Khazars, it would have been strange if the Genizah, which yielded such a rich harvest in all departments of Jewish literature and Jewish history, should not have given us one fragment, at least, relating to this great conversion episode. My expectations in this regard were fulfilled, the Genizah furnishing us with a fragment bearing on the Khazar story, affording quite new matter. It was discovered several years ago, but was only properly examined within the last few months. We shall now present it to the readers of this REVIEW.

The fragment measures 20 x 15 cm. ($7\frac{3}{4}$ x $5\frac{7}{8}$ in.) and consists of one quire numbering two leaves or four pages. The original folding when discovered was in such a way as to give the pagination 209, 211, 205 and 207, and it was only by re-folding it in the manner reproduced here that continuity was made possible. It is written in a beautiful hand, in square characters, but not without a certain turn toward cursive. There is further the combination of Aleph and Lamed in א, chiefly in ישראל.³ It was probably written somewhere in the Orient about the twelfth century if not earlier. The combination of the particle, ש, with the following noun in שלקוריא into one word (l. 41) also points to an early date. Quite peculiar to the MS. is the way of writing קור or קוריא with a ק instead of כ used without an exception in Hebrew literature wherever mention of the Khazars is made.⁴ It should, however, be noted that the writer or the copyist had very little consistency even in his reproduction of names. Thus, he speaks indifferently of קור and קוריא (ll. 7, 11, 18, 54, etc.).⁵ In mentioning Byzantium, he alternates it with מקדון (l. 16) and יון (l. 37), whilst for Turkey he has both טורקיא (l. 57) and טורקי (l. 92). The style, though not entirely biblical, is in a clear and fair Hebrew, with occasional rabbinical phrases (see ll. 13, 19, 29, 36, 43, 79). Of paitanic diction, either in the vocabulary or in the allusive epithets, it is entirely free,

³ This combination is by no means a sign of a late date. We have in the Genizah a MS. written in Jerusalem and dated 1036, in which this combination constantly occurs.

⁴ The spelling כוריא and כוריא occurs in the *Itinerary of Benjamin*, ed. Adler, pp. 14 and 68 (see notes), whilst *The Travels of Petahiah* (ed. Grünhut) writes כוריא, p. 3.

⁵ See Grätz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 4th ed., vol. V, p. 197, note 1. Cf. also Hebrew translation of Grätz, vol. V, p. 199, note בן.

except in one case when it refers to the covenant of Abraham as the *ברית אב המן* (l. 38).⁶

We shall now attempt to give some analysis of the contents of our text, showing at the same time its relation to, as well as its deviation from, the Khazar correspondence known before. Our references to citations from king Joseph's letter will be given from the Harkavy edition in the "Measeph Nidaḥim" mentioned before, which has also the advantage of having its lines numbered. For the sake of brevity, we shall designate it as A. In the case of the letter of Ibn Shaprut, we shall cite the Wilna edition of the "Kuzari" (*ספר הכוזרי*) of 1904, which is the most accessible.

To be noted at first is the fact that our text, not less than A, professes to present a correspondence. This is evident enough from the phrase *הנני מודיע לאדוני* (Behold, "I make it known to my lord"—l. 83 and 84),⁷ and from the reference to the sea "through which thy messengers came to Constantinople" (l. 87). Who the person was to whom the letter was addressed, it is impossible to say with certainty in the defective state of the MS. The probability is very strong in favor of Ibn Shaprut, as no other record of a Jew is left who showed such an interest in the Khazars as to send there a special expedition. The possibility of another Jewish grandee, likewise a contemporary of King Joseph, betraying the same curiosity as the Vizier of the Caliph of Cordova, and possessed of the means enabling him to fit out expeditions; which expedition also makes its way first to Constantinople—such a possibility is so remote

⁶ See Gen. 17, 4. Mr. Halper drew my attention to the *Diwan des Abraham Ibn Ezra*, p. 6, where we have a hymn beginning with *אב המן*.

⁷ A has *מודיע אני לך* (ll. 30, 115) and never *אדוני*, professing to be written by the king.

that it cannot be taken seriously into consideration. But in contradistinction to A, our letter makes no claim to have been written by royalty. The writer is a mere subject of king Joseph, whom he describes as "my lord" (l. 62). I need hardly remind the reader that also in the case of A, it was suggested by some authorities that the letter was written by one of the King's secretaries.⁸ But the difference between the two documents goes much deeper.

The central event of the correspondence is naturally the story of the conversion. Now, there is a certain agreement between the two documents. The champions are the same, Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, and so is in both documents the consent of the three sects as regards the truth of the Hebrew Scriptures, which proves decisive in favor of the Jewish creed (see ll. 16-31 and A, ll. 65-100). The first lines, again, of our text, speaking of the ancestors who would not or could not bear the yoke of the worshipers of idols, wherefore they fled to Khazaria (ll. 1 and 2) imply a partial or preliminary conversion on the part of the Khazars⁹ preceding the one described in the sequel and corresponding more or less with that of Bulan in A. The expression לשוב, "to return," (l. 18; see also l. 36), suggests also that we have to deal here more with a revival of Judaism, or repentance, than with an initial conversion. We may thus assume that in the missing pages there was a reference to some sort of a conversion of the Khazars, equal

⁸ See Grätz, *ibid.*, p. 348. Cf. Harkavy, *R. R.*, VI, p. 75 (n. 2) and p. 92.

⁹ See notes 1, 2 and 3 to the Hebrew text. I must remark, however, that I am not quite certain whether וישארו in l. 3 refers exactly to the Jewish immigrants, as גם הם was only supplied by me. For all we know, he may perhaps have had ימים רבים, or some similar expression.

to that narrated by A. On the other hand, it is clear that the author of our text attributes the final and real conversion of the Khazars and the Judaization of Khazaria, or a part of it, not to any supernatural agency, but to the proselytizing activity of a band of Jews or יהודים (see l. 9) or ישראל (ll. 35 and 36) among the natives, or the "men of Khazaria." According to him, the course of events may be described somewhat as follows: At some time, the people of Khazaria, or a certain number among them, embraced Judaism, but a relapse came, so that they remained without Torah (l. 3), which practically means in this case without any religion, though they did not entirely return to their ancient paganism. This fact of their having left paganism was enough to induce a number of Jews living before in heathen countries to immigrate to Khazaria. The material condition of these new immigrants was apparently a satisfactory one, but spiritual decay set in, and in the course of time they became neglectful in their religious duties, so that they too "were without Torah and Scripture" (ll. 3-4) though they still observed the Covenant of Abraham and a few also kept the Sabbath (ll. 6-7).¹⁰ But they were threatened with complete assimilation owing to their intermarrying with the inhabitants of the land with whom they constantly associated (l. 4). This condition of affairs lasted "many days" which means a long time (see l. 12). At last God had mercy upon them and the revival came (l. 13), brought about by Serah, a Jewish woman, the wife of a Jewish general who, together with her father, turned his heart and "taught him the ways of life" (ll. 13-16). But this was not a conversion, as it is distinctly stated that he was a Jew יהודי (l. 10), and what Serah

¹⁰ See notes 4 and 7 to the Hebrew text.

and her father had to overcome was not the prejudices of a gentile, but the indifference of an indolent, easy-going Jew. But as he was one of the most successful generals of the Khazars in his time, having on one occasion put the enemy to flight (ll. 9, 10 and 11), his renewed zeal for the creed of his ancestors apparently not only affected his Jewish brethren, but also gave fresh religious impetus to the native population. It was then, as it would seem, that the work of proselytizing among the people began, which provoked the jealousy of the kings of Macedon (or Greece = Christians; l. 16) and the kings of Arabia (= Mohammedans; l. 17). The main danger lay evidently in that, by their "blasphemies" (l. 18), they also influenced the princes of Khazaria, whose hearts they turned to evil (ll. 18, 20, 21). These princes probably consisted of the proselytes who were still wavering in their minds. Thereupon, they had recourse to the disputation, which resulted in favor of the Jews and caused both the Jews as well as the new proselytes, or the men of Khazaria to return in "perfect repentance" (l. 36). To these were added fresh immigrations from Bagdad, Khorasan (כורסן), and from Greece, who strengthened the hands of the natives (ll. 37-38).¹¹ The primary cause of the conversion was thus the zeal of a pious Jewess for the faith of Israel, whilst the immediate cause was the victory of the

¹¹ A has no distinct reference to these facts (see ll. 100 and 105). The best parallel is Masudi (translation Sprenger), I, p. 404, where he speaks of "the Jews from all the Muslim districts and from the Byzantine Empire," who came to Khazaria. See also Paris edition, II, p. 8. Cf. Grätz, *Geschichte*, *ibid.*, p. 198, text and note, as well as Harkavy, *R. R.*, X, 314. According to our text this immigration under Sabriel, the first real Jewish king of Khazaria, took place long (perhaps centuries) before the persecution of the Jews by Romanus (see note 22). The text in Masudi seems to allow of differing explanations. See Chwolson *Achtzehn Hebräische Grabschriften*, etc., p. 101; cf. also Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge*, p. 6.

Jewish general, which gave him all the authority required for the creation of a new order of things, raising Judaism to the dignity of the established religion of the court and of the bulk of the Khazar population, and resulting in the election of a new king.

On the other hand, it should be remembered that, according to the historians, Khazaria was governed by two rulers: the one bearing the title of grand Khagan, who occupied a position somewhat similar to that held by the Mikado a generation ago—looked upon as a sort of divinity by the population, leading a strictly secluded life, and never coming into direct contact with his subjects; the other possessing the title of Peg or Peh, who represented a kind of vice-Khagan or vice-king, but possessing all authority by reason of his being the real governor of the country.¹² It is thus not impossible that the constitutional changes just indicated only affected the office of the vice-king. In this case, we shall, of course, have to take the expression מלך (ll. 7, 42) in a rather loose sense, referring to the vice-Khagan or Peg.¹³ If we could now assume that Sabriel is in some way an equivalent to Obadiah, we might then recognize in our text the supplement to the story of this king whom A also considers as the real founder of

¹² See Cassel, *Magyarische Alterthümer*, p. 206, note 2 and Grätz, *Geschichte*, *ibid.*, p. 198.

¹³ L. 7 of our text states ולא היה מלך בארץ קוריא, "and there was no king in the land of Khazaria." As to Sabriel, before his election he is called שר צבא or general (ll. 11, 12) and again as it seems השר הגדול היהודי (l. 21) which is identical with שר הגדול שלקוריא (l. 41). The old versions, Wilna ed. 4a, have also השר הגדול (who is the same as the שר צבא of the *Kuzari*, II, 1). Cf. Cassel as above. A l. 51 has של פלוני omitting הגדול which is probably a mere clerical error.

Judaism in Khazaria, but on whose political activity he dwells no further.¹⁴

But even this interpretation would not remove the discrepancies between our text and A. For, apart from other considerations, according to this latter, the disputation falls under Bulan, who reigned long before Obadiah. Further, according to A, this pious king is a great-grandson of Bulan (l. 106), whilst, according to our text, he must have been a descendant of a Jewish immigrant. That he only assumed his Jewish name when he ascended the throne would merely prove that in the assimilation times they adopted Khazar names. When the author of our text further volunteers the information (of which A knows nothing) that they maintain that their ancestors were of the tribe of Simeon, but that they cannot probe the truth of the matter (ll. 43-44), it is only consistent with the whole trend of his narrative which is chiefly concerned with the nucleus of the old Jewish population of that country, who, according to him, were the mainspring in this whole Judaizing movement.¹⁵ Very peculiar is his explanation of the title of Khagan (כִּנֵּן), losing with him its historical significance, as it is not confined to

¹⁴ The name סְבִירְיָאֵל is not known to me from Jewish literature. If we could assume that it is a corruption of עֲבִדְיָאֵל (Jer. 30, 26) or עֲבִדְיָאֵל (I Chron. 5, 15) we might recognize in him עֲבֹדִיָּה (the meaning of both being the servant of God) generally held to the king who introduced the Jewish creed in Khazaria. Bulan belongs more or less to the domain of legend. A has the words וְהוּא חָרַשׁ אֶת הַמְּלוּכָה (l. 106) but he does not explain how this regeneration was brought about nor the impulse actuating Obadiah in his zeal for the proselytizing work.

¹⁵ See about this point Abraham Epstein, *Eldad ha-Dani*, pp. XXVIII, 7 and 25. All the parallels have the tribe Simeon and the half of Manasseh. It is remarkable that Carmoly in his עֲקָטָאן דְּמֹר יַעֲקֹב (justly considered by all scholars to be a forgery) speaks only of שְׁבַט שְׁמַעוֹן (pp. 10 and 12).

royalty but marks a mere judge chosen from among the wise men.¹⁶ I hardly need indicate how all this, as well as other points in our account, is at variance with all that is known about the history of the Khazars from other sources. Another peculiar feature worth noting in the presentation of the conversion story of our text, is that of the cave in the valley of תיזול, from which they brought the Holy Book to be explained by the sages of Israel (ll. 32-35). This story is entirely missing in A, but we have some reminiscence of it in the Letter of Ibn Shaprut as well as in the "Kuzari," which shows that it formed an essential feature in the conversion story.¹⁷

Next in importance to the story of the conversion in our text are the political complications following upon it. A, which gives whole lists of nations and tribes subject to the Khazars (A, ll. 118-130), never enters upon details of war. He is satisfied with such a general statement as "from the day that our ancestors came under the wings of the Shekinah, He subjected to us all our enemies and humiliated all the nations and tongues around us" (A, ll. 103-105). In another place he has a special reference to the Russians, against whom the Khazars guard the mouth of the river and with whom they had hard battles, or they would exterminate the whole of the Mohammedan country as far as Bagdad (A, ll. 131, 135). Our text is more complete in this respect. Thus in A, mention is made of the Alani (אלניים), with a

¹⁶ I have not found this explanation of the term כנן in any other work, Slucki, in his edition of the Kuzari, p. 47, says וואולי קרוב לשם חכם. I have some doubt as to the word השופטים (l. 40) whether it is not indifferently used, and may thus perhaps stand for regents or some other high dignitaries.

¹⁷ See Ibn Shaprut's letter, p. 3b and Kuzari, II, 1. The valley of תיזול I could not identify.

single word, the name occurring in the list of the subjected nations (l. 124), whilst our text devotes to this nation several lines (ll. 44-60).¹⁸ The defective state of the MS. makes it impossible to form a clear notion of the story our author intended to give us, but a few facts may be gleaned nevertheless. The most important is that the conversion

¹⁸ Our text reads always אֲלָן. The *Itinerary of Benjamin*, ed. Asher, speaks of the land of אֲלָנִיָּה and of the nation called אֲלָנִי (p. 62), but ed. Adler (p. 41) has אֲלָן. See also Marquart, p. 485. Cf. *Jossippon*, ch. 1, about the ten families into which Togarmah branched off, of which Khazar is the first. The third in this list is אֲלִיקִינוֹם, which gave great difficulties to the commentators. I understand that Dr. Harkavy suggests in his Russian book on the Khazars the reading אֲלִלְחָנוֹם. This emendation is greatly supported by Dr. Gaster's *Chronicles of Jerachmeel*, p. 67, where the third in this list is אֲלָן (Alan). See also Dr. Gaster's remarks to the passage in his Introduction, p. lxxvii. The following extracts from Constantinus Porphyrogenete's *De Administrando Imperio*, chs. X and XI, for which I am entirely indebted to my friend Dr. Max Radin, will help to illustrate the relations between the Khazars and the Alani: "About Khazaria: How war is to be made upon them and by whom. The Uzi are in a position to make war upon the Khazari, inasmuch as they border on them. Likewise, the chief of Alania, because the nine frontier provinces of Khazaria are adjacent to Alania, and the Alani can, if they wish, plunder them and can cause great harm and want to the Khazari by so doing, for from these nine frontier provinces the Khazars derive all the necessities of life and all their wealth. Chapter XI. About the Fort Cherson and the Fort Bosphorus: Since the chief of Alania is not at peace with the Khazars, but regards the friendship of the Roman Emperor as preferable, if the Khazari are not willing to maintain peace and friendship towards the Emperor, he (the Alan chief) can injure them greatly, by lying in wait on the roads and attacking them unexpectedly when they proceed against Sarkel and the frontier provinces and Cherson. For, if the afore-mentioned chief (of the Alani) takes care to bar their passage, Cherson and the frontier provinces will enjoy profound peace. For since the Khazari fear an inroad of the Alani and have no opportunity of attacking Cherson and the frontier provinces with an army, because they cannot make war with both, they will be forced to be at peace." Migne, *Patr.* 113, p. 177-178. Cf. Harkavy in Geiger's *Jüdische Zeitschrift*, III (1864-5), pp. 291-292.

(perhaps even more the election of a new "King") was not taken in a meek spirit by the defeated parties, so that there was the fear of a combination of the nations around them. This made it necessary on the part of the Khazars to terminate the feud and conclude peace with their neighbor, the king of the Alani, lest he join their enemies when they rise up to war against them (ll. 44-47). How long this peace lasted, we have no means of determining, as we do not know how many kings intervened between Sabriel and Benjamin. Nor is it quite certain how far, considering the abrupt manner of our author, we have a right to refer the והשלים (l. 44) "and he (the king) made peace" to Sabriel; but this is clear, that in the time of king Benjamin, the peace was broken (see ll. 49-55), an alliance having been formed against the Khazars, consisting of the king of Asia, the king of Turkey, the פייניל, and the king of Macedon (Constantinople—ll. 50-52).¹⁹ Only the king of the Alani, who, it would seem, had himself Jewish subjects (l. 53),²⁰ remained loyal and, whilst the allies fought against the Khazars, he attacked them successfully in their own country and the result was that they were utterly defeated by king Benjamin (ll. 52-55).

The amity between the king of the Alani and the king of the Khazars does not seem to have been of long du-

¹⁹ See note 26 to the Hebrew text. By אסיא (ll. 51, 92) are perhaps meant certain Caucasian tribes. See Kohut, *Aruch Completum*, I, p. 179 (אסיא 3). The name פייניל I am unable to identify. Perhaps it is a corruption of פליאן (= Polianes) who paid tribute to the Khazars. See *Chronique dite de Nestor*, traduite, par Louis Leger, Paris 1884, p. 12.

²⁰ כי מקצתם שומרים תורת היהודים (l. 53), which I take to refer to the Alani, though the missing words just before this line, make it impossible to speak with certainty. See also Grätz, *Geschichte*, *ibid.*, p. 200, where it is maintained on the authority of some Arabic sources that some of the vassals of the Khazars accepted the religion of their Jewish masters.

ration. For our author proceeds to record that in the time of King Aaron (the successor of Benjamin), the king of Greece (Constantinople) succeeded in persuading the king of the Alani to fight the Khazars (ll. 55-56). Aaron then made a counter-move in hiring the king of Turkey (to attack the king of the Alani) (l. 57). Here we have several gaps in the MS., but so much we can see, that Aaron came out victorious, and that the victory was followed by a marital alliance: Joseph, the son of Aaron, marries the daughter of the king of the Alani and this latter takes the oath of fealty to Aaron, and the happy result of all this was that from that day the fear of the Khazars "fell upon the nations which surrounded them" (ll. 56-61).²¹

Of more importance are the complications of the Khazars in wars with Russia, which, as is well-known, had in the end the most disastrous results for the former. Of this, however, our writer gives no indication as he finishes his report with the words: "Then the Russians became subdued under the hand of the Khazar" (l. 83). A, as already mentioned, has only a general reference to these wars. The author of our text gives the following presentation of the matter.

According to him, the first clash of the Khazars with the Russians fell in the time of king Joseph. The cause of it was, as it seems, a persecution of the Jews in the days of the "wicked Romanus" (of Constantinople), leading to retaliation on the part of Joseph (ll. 61-63).²²

²¹ The Aaron mentioned in our text is probably Aaron the second, the son of Benjamin (l. 55) and the father of Joseph (l. 59). Note that all these wars accordingly belong to the times of the last three Jewish Kings of Khazaria of which A records not less than thirteen (A 110-112.) Cf. Harkavy, note 243, in the Hebrew translation of Grätz's *Geschichte*, *ibid.*, p. 121.

²² See notes 37 and 38 to the Hebrew text. About Romanus' persecution of the Jews, see the authorities referred to above, note 11. Grätz's

who "trod down many of the uncircumcised."²³ Romanus then persuaded הלנו, the king of Russia, to whom he sent great gifts, to inflict evil upon the Khazars (ll. 64-65). הלנו then surprised the country of the סמברי in the night, during the absence of the commander, and captured it. When the matter became known to בולשצי (whose Hebrew name was פסח Pesah), he attacked in retaliation the cities of Romanus of which he captured three, apart from many hamlets. From there, he marched against שורשו.²⁴ (ll. 64-69). Here come several lines, the first half of each of which is torn off, but we can read so much, that Pesah was victorious in his march, and turned in the end against הלנו, whom he also defeated (ll. 73-75). He then threatened to continue the war against הלנו unless the latter would consent to attack Romanus, the instigator of the hostilities (ll. 72-79). הלנו then reluctantly marches against Constantinople, where he wages war on the sea for four months, but he is defeated by the Greek fire of the Macedonians and loses all his mighty men. Being ashamed to return to his land, he fled by way of the sea to Persia, where he and his host perished (ll. 79-82).

Hebrew records know nothing about all these facts, and it is to non-Jewish sources that we have to turn for matter corroborative of our story, but these sources again

objection to the date, so that he thinks Masudi confused Romanus with Leo is not convincing. As remarked above, we have probably to deal here with different immigrations, whilst the fact that no other source speaks of a persecution under Romanus (who reigned from 919 to 945) does not prove much. The assertion of Sprenger that Masudi refers to Romanus II, is not clear to me.

²³ סילה רבים ערלים. See Lamen. 1, 15. I hardly need draw attention again to the state of the MS., which makes my statements in the text lack in certainty.

²⁴ See note 41 to the Hebrew text.

offer so many statements at variance with our text, as to make the two accounts entirely irreconcilable. Thus, there can hardly be any doubt that הלנו is identical with Oleg, the famous chieftain with whom the Russian nation makes almost its first appearance on the stage of history.²⁵ Likewise, we may identify the סמבריי with the Seviri or Sewerians of whom we know from Russian sources that they were vassals of the Khazars and were subsequently attacked by Oleg who forbade them to pay tribute to the Khazars.²⁶ But here we meet with the difficulty that, according to the Russian authorities, this event took place in 884 and that it was Oleg who bore the victory over the Khazars.²⁷ Our text apparently places the event during the reign of king Joseph, who flourished about 940, while the death of Oleg occurred, according to all authorities, in the year 912.²⁸ The same chronological difficulty presents itself in the part which Romanus plays in our story. For the fact that there was a persecution of the Jews of Greece during his reign one may perhaps refer to Masudi.²⁹ That, further, the Russians invaded Constantinople under Romanus and were beaten off by the means of the Greek fire is sufficiently corroborated by the testimony of Byzantine writers.³⁰ But

²⁵ The works mainly used by me in connection with this part of our text, are: Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (ed. Bury), Theodor Schiemann, *Russland Polen und Livland*, Berlin 1886, and the Nestor *Chronicle*, mentioned above, note 19.

²⁶ See Nestor, pp. 18 and 22, and Schiemann, I, pp. 48 and 49. How far these Sewerians can be identified with the סוויאר or סוואר of A (II. 33 and 118) I am not able to say. See Harkavy *R. R.*, VI, p. 93.

²⁷ See Schiemann and Nestor, *ibid.*, cf. also the Index to Nestor by the editor Leger, under the names *Kozares*, *Oleg*, and *Sévériens*.

²⁸ See Nestor, p. 33, and Schiemann, p. 51.

²⁹ See above, note 21.

³⁰ See Gibbon, VI, pp. 155 and 156, and Schiemann, p. 53.

according to these Greek sources, it was Igor, the successor of Oleg, who led the Russian expedition against Constantinople and suffered defeat at the hands of Romanus at some time in the year 941.³¹ Of Oleg's expedition the Byzantine writers have nothing to record, while, according to the Russian sources, the expedition by Oleg occurred in the year 907, long before Romanus ascended the throne, and it was the Russians who defeated the Greeks and forced on them a treaty of peace to their advantage.³² Such contradictory statements cannot well be reconciled and we must accordingly accept the view that the writer of our text had his information only from secondary sources and confused both persons and dates.³³ On the other hand, our text shows at least one criterion which speaks for a very early date. It is that we have here the only document which comes nearest to the Scandinavian form of the name of this Russian hero, הלגו (Scandinavian Helgi), instead of אֵלִיג or אֵלִיג (Oleg), thus testifying to the theory of the Norse origin of the founders of the Russian Empire. This affinity of names was long ago suggested by all modern authorities on this subject, but it is our text which really gives the form resembling most the one surmised by these authorities, a fact indicating that our author derived his information from very ancient or even contemporary sources, when the heroes of the

³¹ See Gibbon and Schiemann, *ibid.*

³² See Nestor, p. 22, *seq.*; Gibbon, p. 155, text and notes, and Schiemann, p. 49, *seq.*

³³ One might perhaps suspect that we have here a confusion between Oleg and Olga (or Helgi and Helga), who played an important part in the reign of her husband Igor, but it does not seem probable.

earliest period in Russian history were still called by their Scandinavian names.³⁴ His reference again to the escape of a portion of the Russian army to Persia after its defeat by Romanus, which is mentioned by very few authorities, but is nevertheless testified to by some writers, would also speak for the acquaintance of our author with the history of those times. On the other hand, it would seem that the whole story of Oleg, as given by Russian historians, entirely based on the chronicle of Nestor, is not beyond all doubt, and that both its facts and its dates may be questioned. However, I do not wish to press this point. I must leave the decision of this, as well as any other question connected with Russian history, to Russian scholars and specialists in Russian history and geography, my knowledge of these subjects being derived only from second or even third-hand sources.

The last lines of our MS. are geographical, and entirely differ from A. In giving the name of his country, the writer has recourse to books (ll. 84-85), which named it אַרקנוס Arkanos. In this we may recognize the ancient name of the Caspian Sea, designated as Mare Hyrcanum³⁵ and afterwards called the Sea of the Khazars. But his appeal to books makes it doubtful whether it was still the name of his country in his time. He further tells us that the name of the metropolis is קור divided by the river Atel

³⁴ See about this point Bury in his Appendix to Gibbon, VI, p. 553, seq., Schieman, p. 48, and Leger in the Index to Nestor, p. 344.

³⁵ See Kiepert, *Atlas Antiquus*, map I; Harkavy, *R. R.*, XI, p. 162, and Marquart, p. 9, note 1. But the land of the Khazars is never called אַרקנוס in Hebrew literature.

which passes through it. This is also confirmed by other writers.³⁶ But his description of the river as being "south of the sea which comes from . . . הַיָּם through which thy messengers came to Constantinople" (ll. 86-87) is unintelligible to me.³⁷ Atel, as we know, is identical with the Volga and is thus in the north of any sea in the direction of Constantinople. His additional explanation "And I believe that it starts from the Great Sea" (l. 87-88), does not improve matters. By the Great Sea is usually meant the Mediterranean, but this is the very sea which Shaprut's messengers must have traversed on their voyage from

³⁶ See A, ll. 116 and 136; Cassel, *Magyarische Alterthümer* p. 217, text and notes (giving references to Arabic writers); Carmoly, *Itinéraires*, pp. 15 and 23, and Harkavy, *R. R.*, XI, p. 380, as to the situation of the capital of the Khazars. As to its name, cf. Harkavy, *R. R.*, X, p. 324, the quotation he gives there from a Persian author according to which the name of the city was Chasar. See also Marquart, p. 3. A close parallel to it we have in the *שארית ישראל* of Man. There he says:

מִן זֶמַּנִּית דֶּש עֵר (כּוֹזֵר דֶּר זֶוֹן פֿון תּוֹגֶרמָא) קָאם
 בִּי דַעֲן בֶּאֱך וּוּאֶלְנָא : דֶּא הָאֵט עֵר אִיִּן שְׂמַאט גֶּעבּוּאִיט
 דִּי הֵט עֵר נֶאָך זֵיִן נֶאֱמֶען גֶּעִהִישֵׁן אֶלְכּוֹזֵר :
 דֶּש פֶּאֶלֶק דֶּש נֶאֱהֶנֶט דֶּא בִי וּוּאֶנֶטֶן אוּיֶף דִּי צִפּוֹן זֵיִט
 פֿון דִּי קֶאשְׁפִּישִׁיע זַע .

The Hebrew translation is incorrect.

³⁷ See note 47 of Hebrew text. Possibly there is some confusion here between the Volga and the Don which were supposed by some to mingle somewhere a little higher in the north and which latter emptied into the Maeotis (Azoff). But even this would hardly justify the expression *מימין*. See also "Die Chazaren," by Kutschera (Wien, 1910) p. 121, and his hypothesis regarding the position of the river by which the Khazar capital was situated.

Spain to Constantinople.³⁸ The description again of the distance between that sea and the country of the writer, as 2160 רים (*ris*), is also not clear to me, as this would only amount to 72 *parasangs*. And so are his other distances between his country and Constantinople which are given as 9 days on sea and 28 days on land, whilst the extent of the dominion of the Khazars he gives as 50 days. All these geographical points are obscure to me and I do not consider myself competent to deal with them in any adequate way.³⁹ The last line, which abruptly ends in the middle of a sentence, gives a list of the nations fighting with them, two of which I am unable to identify.⁴⁰

We shall now try to give a summary of the results of the preceding remarks. It must be evident from what we have said thus far that A and our text represent two documents addressed probably to the same person, but composed by different writers. A gives us a document professing to be written by the king who was a direct

³⁸ See however Ibn Shaprut's letter where he describes the situation of Cordova as being *משמאל לים המהלך אל ארציכם היוצא מן הים הגדול וסובב כל הארץ*. He speaks further of the *ים הגדול אשר אין אחריו ישוב* (2b). The term *ים הגדול* is thus the ocean. The words of our text *מן הים הגדול מושך* would then correspond with *מן הים הגדול היוצא* of Ibn Shaprut.

³⁹ Ibn Shaprut in his Letter says that between the kingdom of the Khazars and Constantinople is 15 days on sea, but does not give the distance on land. Whether the words *ארץ ממשלת אדוני* (l. 91) also includes the vassals and the tributaries, I have no means of determining. It is also difficult to say whether the writer understood by *רים* exactly the same measure which the Talmud meant by it.

⁴⁰ These are *לוחניו* and *זיבום*. Perhaps the latter might be identified with the Lusinin (לוצנין) of the "*Chronicles of Jerahmeel*," p. 68. See also Gaster's remarks in the Introduction, p. LXXVII.

descendant of the Khazar dynasty and derived his pedigree from Japheth, whilst our text, as is clear enough, raises no such claims; it is written by a mere subject. The writer again is, if we are not quite mistaken in our interpretation, more concerned about the Jewish than about the native population of that country, the former of which gave the Khazars their first Jewish king.⁴¹ They differ also largely in style. They differ further in the subject matter, A omitting features characteristic of our text (such as the story of the wars with the Alani and the Russians), whilst in some points they are distinctly at variance. On the whole, it may perhaps be said that in A the theological tendency is more predominant, whilst in our text it is the narrative element which is prominent.⁴² Thus our text can never have formed a part of A, or represented a different version of the same document, as was the case with Harkavy's edition of the Khazar letter, which formed only a completer and more correct text of Akrish's discovery. It is not likely that the king of the Khazars caused his secretaries to write two letters or that somebody would have had the courage to write a different letter after the king had sent the one writ-

⁴¹ I am not unaware that the terms יהורי or יהורים occurring in our text could be strained to apply to the original proselytes or semi-proselytes of the Khazari population. But I do not see the necessity to force this meaning upon a term otherwise plain enough whilst the whole drift of our text points to a tendency of emphasizing the importance of a Jewish nucleus working as a leaven among the Khazars.

⁴² The best way to realize this difference is to compare the story of the disputation of A (ll. 64-96) and our text (ll. 16-35). Our text is not only shorter, the writer hurrying over the theological arguments as of no consequence to him, but has also a different vocabulary.

ten or dictated by him. The question now confronting us is, Which of the two is authentic? This question, I think, cannot be answered with any amount of certainty as long as our text is not completed by other new finds, which will give us not only the beginning of the document, but may reveal to us more matter and a fuller text relating both to the geography and to the history of the time. In its present shape, one cannot suppress the feeling that we have before us events which extended over many generations, crowded into too narrow a compass, and it is not impossible that the list of nations fighting against the Khazars, in the middle of which our fragment breaks up, was only an introduction to more historical and chronological matter, connecting in some way the preceding statements, or at least supplementing them. In any case, our text, I am sure, forms an important contribution to the history of the Khazars, and as such I am certain it will be welcome to students especially to those whose Russian and Arabic knowledge will enable them to continue their researches of which a humble beginning is made in the preceding pages. The facsimile, map⁴⁸ and English translation⁴⁴ accompanying the Hebrew text will, I hope, prove helpful to the student.

In conclusion, I take the opportunity of recording my sincerest thanks to my friend, Dr. Max Radin, whom I had occasion to consult many a time whilst writing this article, particularly in matters relating to Byzantine

⁴⁸ This map is taken from the Spruner Menke *Hand-Atlas für die Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 3d ed., Gotha 1880. Europa, No. IV.

⁴⁴ For an English translation of the correspondence between Ibn Shaprut and King Joseph as published by Akrish, see *Miscellany of Hebrew Literature*, I, 73, *seq.*

history. I am also under great indebtedness to Mr. Ben Zion Halper of Dropsie College, for his aid in reading the MS. and for various valuable suggestions. I am also under obligation to several gentlemen for their readiness in helping me to procure the necessary books. My special thanks are due to Mr. Frederic W. Erb of the Columbia University Library, who spared no trouble in providing me with books, periodicals and maps connected with this subject, otherwise inaccessible to me.

HEBREW TEXT

- 1 ארמיניא ויברחו מפניהם אבותי י¹
 2 לשאת עול עובדי אלילים ויקבלום א כי . . . שי²
 3 קוריא היו תחילה בלא תורה וישאר בלא³
 4 תורה ומכתב ויתחתנו ליושבי הארץ וי הם⁴
 5 וילמדו מעשיהם ויצאו עמם תמיד ב ⁵
 6 ויהיו לעם אחר⁶ רק בברית מילה נסמכו ומק ⁷
 7 שומרים את השבת ולא היה מלך בארץ קוריא כי ⁸
 8 אשר היה עושה במלחמה נצחונות שמוהו עליהם לשר
 9 צבא עד פעם שיצאו עמהם היהודים במלחמה כפעם
 10 בפעם ואותו היום גבר יהודי אחד בחרבו והבריה את
 11 הצרים הבאים על קור ושמוהו עליהם אנשי קור לשר
 12 צבא במשפטם⁹ הראשון ויהיו בדברים האלה ימים רבים
 13 עד אשר חנן יי ויעורר את לב השר לשוב בתשובה
 14 כי הטתו אשתו סרח שמה ותלמדו להועיל¹⁰ וגם הוא
 15 ניאת כי מהול היה וגם אבי הנערה איש צדיק בדור
 16 ההוא הורהו דרך החיים . ויהי בשמוע מלכי מקדון
 17 ומלכי ערב את הדברים האלה חרה להם מאד וישלחו
 18 מלאכים אל שרי קוריא דברי גידופים על ישראל לאמר
 19 מה לכם לשוב באמונת היהודים שהם משועבדים תחת
 20 ידי כל אומות וידברו דברים שאין לנו לספר ויטו את
 21 לב השרים לרע ויאמר השר הגדול היהודי מה לנו
 22 להרבות דברים יבואו מחכמי ישראל ומחכמי יון
 23 ומחכמי ערב ויגידו לפנינו ולפניכם כל אחד מהם

¹ Perhaps we should supply **כי לא יכלו** or **כי נלאו**.

² Perhaps it read here **[אנ]שי** **א כי** **[אנ]קורי** **א כי**. The **שי** at the end of the line is doubtful.

³ Supply here **בלא** **[גם הם]** **וישאר**.

⁴ Supply **הם** **[עמ]** **הם**. Cf. Ps. 106, 35. The **ה** before the final **ם** is very doubtful.

⁵ Line 9, below, would suggest **[ב]מלחמה**.

⁶ Read **אחד**. ⁷ Read **[צתם]** **ומק**. ⁸ Supply **[ם]** **א**.

⁹ Read **כמשפטם**. ¹⁰ See Isai. 48, 17.

אדמוניא ויחדה מפניהם אבות
 לשואת על שפדי אליהם ויהבום
 קורא מין תחילה בלא תורה נישא
 תורה ומכות ויתחננו ליושר הארץ ויהי
 ילמדו מעשיהם ויניחו עמוס תמיד בל
 עם אחד רק בברית מילה נסמכו ומי
 מורים את השבת ולא היה מקר בארץ קדש
 אשר היה עשה במלחמה נחשט שמוחה וחסלות
 יבא עד העם שני לאו עמם היהודים במלחמה נסמך
 בעם לאות היום גבר יהודי אחד בדרך חכם וזה
 העם בלאם על קדש ושמוחה עליהם קדש לשון
 עבא במשפטם הראשון והם בדברם היתה היפוכים
 עד אמרוהו לא ויעמד אתה השור לשון בלחם
 כי הטות ופחת סחך שמה ותלמדוהו להעניס היום
 ניאור כי מהול היה וגם אבי סמיה אש יחוסר
 היום היתה דרך החיים ויהי כפמיון מלכו מקדו
 ומלך ידב אות הדברים האלה חרה להם מאד וישלחו
 שורם אל מדי קורא דברי גידופים עליהם ולא
 מהלם לשון באמונת היהודים שהם שועבד יסתות
 ידי סמיה ויגדו דברים שאין להם לספר ויטו את
 לב השורים לרע ויאמר השור הגדול והיהודי מהלכו
 להרבות דברים יבואו מחכמי ישור ומחכמי יון
 ומחכמי ערב ויגדו לפניהם כל אחד מהם

24	ש. א. 11	אחריתו ויעשו כן וישלח
25	ל. 12	מלכי ערב והתנדרבו חכמי ישראל
26	בוא. ש. 13	קזריא ויפתחו היוונים להעיד
27	ה. 14	התחילו היהודים והערכים להכזיבו ¹⁵ ואחר
28	בי. 16	והכזיבום היהודים והיוונים ואחר פתחו
29	אל. 17	מששת ימי בראשית עד יום עלות ישראל
30		ממצרים ועד בואם אל ארץ נושבת ¹⁸ העידו היוונים
31		והערכים אמת והצדקום וגם נפלה ביניהם מחלוקת
32		ואמרו שרי קזריא הנה מערה בבקעת תיולל הוציאו לנו
33		את הספרים אשר שם ופרשום לפנינו ויעשו כן ויבאו
34		בתוך המערה והנה שם ספרים מתורת משה ויפרשום
35		חכמי ישראל כדברים הראשונים אשר דברו וישבו
36		ישראל עם אנשי קזריא בתשובה שלימה ויחלו היהודים
37		לבוא מן בגדד ומן כורסן ומארץ יון והחזיקו בידי אנשי
38		הארץ ויתחזקו בברית אב המון ¹⁹ וישימו עליהם אנשי
39		הארץ אחד מן החכמים לשופט וקוראין שמו בלשון
40		קזר כגן על כן נקראו שמות השופטים שקמו אחריו
41		כגן עד היום והשר הנדול שלקזריא הסיבו שמו
42		סבריאלי ומליכוהו עליהם למלך ואומרים בארצינו
43		כי אבותינו משבט שמעון היו אבל אינינו עומדים
44		על אמתת הדבר והשלים המלך עם מלך אלן שכנינו
45		כי מלכות אלן עזה וקשה מכל האומות אשר סביבותינו
46		כי אמרו החכמים פן יתעוררו עלינו האומות למלחמה

¹¹ Of the word coming after ש.ה, beginning with א, the upper stroke of a ל is still discernible. We should thus perhaps supply [מע]ש.ה א[להיהם] ונראה. אחריתו.

¹² The remaining letters and the context suggest: [למלך י] ון מ[לאכים וגם] [ל. מלכי].

¹³ Supply [ל]בוא [לעזרת אנ]ש[י]. However, the ש of אנשי is very doubtful.

¹⁴ The traces of two or three letters before the ה, which is also very doubtful, are too faint to suggest anything. The rest is torn off.

¹⁵ Read להכזיבם, as below, 28.

¹⁶ The letters כי are very doubtful, though to judge from the context it must have read here העידו הערכים.

¹⁷ Supply [חכמי ישר]אל. ¹⁸ See Exod. 16, 35.

¹⁹ Allusion to Abraham. See Gen. 17, 3.

[illegible]

47	ונוסף גם הוא על שנאינו ²⁰ על בן ה ²¹
48	איש את אחיו בצרה ויהי חתת א ²²
49	סביבותינו ולא באו על מלכות קור ²³
50	המלך נתעוררו כל האומות על ²⁴ ויציקו ²⁵
51	מלך מקדון ויבאו למלחמה מלך אסיה וט ²⁶
52 ופיינל ומקדון רק מלך אלן היה בעזרת ²⁷
53	כי מקצתם היו שומרים תורת היהודים אלו המלכים ²⁸
54	נלחמו על קזריא ומלך אלן הלך על ארצם וי ²⁹ עד
55	אין מרפא ³⁰ ויגפם יי לפני בנימין המלך וגם בימי ³¹ אהרן
56	המלך נלחם מלך אלן על קור כי הסיתו מלך יון וישכור
57	עליו אהרן את מלך טורקיא כי היה ³² יופול מלך
58	אלן לפני אהרן וילכדהו חי ויכבדהו ³³ אד ויקח
59	את בתו לבנו ליוסף לאשה אז ³⁴ לו מלך אלן אמונה
60	וישלחהו אהרן המלך ה ומהיום ההוא ³⁵ נפלה אימת
61	קור על האומות אשר סביבותם וגם בימי יוסף המלך
62	אדוני ³⁶ רו בהיות השמדה בימי רומנוס הרשע
63 הדב ³⁷ לאדוני סילה רבים ערלים וגם רומנוס
64 ³⁸ שלח מתנות גדולות להלגו מלך רוסיא ויסיתו
65	לרעתו ויבוא על מדינת סמבריי לילה וילכדה בניניה
66	כי לא היה שם הפקיד רב חשמוניי וידע הדבר לבולשצי
67	הוא פסח המיקר ³⁹ ויבא על עירי ⁴⁰ רומנוס בחרון אף ויד
68	מאיש ועד אשה וילכד שלוש עיירות לבד הפרוודים
69	הרבה מאד ומשם בא על שורשו ⁴¹ וילחם עליה

²⁰ See Exod. i, 10.

²¹ Probably there followed here: ה[שלים עמו לעזור]. Cf. l. 44.

²² The biblical reference: Gen. 35, 5 and below, l. 45, suggest supplying below, l. 45 א[להים על האומות אשר].

²³ Only a trace of a מ or a ה is visible. Line 55 would suggest that we had here בימי בנימין אבל.

²⁴ Here is just space for קזריא.

²⁵ Perhaps we should supply להם בעצת.

²⁶ Read וטורקיא. The rest of the line is torn off whilst the beginning of the next is obliterated, which might possibly be supplied by l. 92.

UNIV.
LIB.
CAMB.

ויצאו מן הארץ כתולעים	70
ישראל וימותו כהם תשעים איש	71
אבל שמם למס עובר ויצל ⁴²	72
יד רוסו וק ⁴³ את כל הנמצאים מהם	73
ר ⁴⁴ ומשם הלך על הלנו למלחמה וילחם	74
חדשים ויכניעוהו אלהים לפני פסח וימצא	75
שלל אשר לקח מסמבריו ואומר כי רומנוס ⁴⁵	76
השיאני את ויאמר לו פסח אם כן לך על רומנוס	77
והלחם בו כאשר נלחמתה בי ואלך מעליך ואם לא פה	78
אמות או אחיה עד אנקום נקמתי וילך בעל כורחו	79
וילחם על קוסטנטינא ארבעה חדשים בים ויפלו שם	80
גבוריו כי גברו מקדונים באש וינס ויכלם לשוב אל	81
ארצו וילך אל פרס בים ויפל שם הוא וכל מחנהו	82
אז היו רוסיים כנועים תחת ידי קזר הנני	83
מודיע לאדוני שם ארצנו כאשר מצאנו בספרים	84
ארקנוס ושם עיר הממלכה קזר ושם הנהר העובר	85
בתוכה אטיל והו מימין לים הבא מהוצ ⁴⁷ אשר	86
עברו בו שלוחיד לקוסטנטינא וכמדומה אני מן	87
הים הגדול מושך ומדינתנו רחוקה מן הים ההוא	88
אלפים ומאה וששים רים ובין ארצנו לקוסטנטינא	89
בים תשעה ימים וביבשה שמנה ועשרים יום	90
וארץ ממשלת אדוני חמשים יום הנה הנלחמים עמנו	91
אסיה ובאב אלאבואב וזיבוס ומורקו ולחניו	92

⁴² One or two letters are visible before the ה, which may be the remainder of a ל or a ב.

⁴³ The ך is most probably the remainder of מיד. After the ך following רוסו the leg of a ק is still discernible, thus suggesting זיקה, followed by את. The רוסיים stands for רוסו.

⁴⁴ Probably it was חרב. Supply לפי ויכם.

⁴⁵ Before שלל, signs resembling an ע, possibly also a ה, are seen. Perhaps we should supply [עוד]שלל...

⁴⁶ Traces of לו are visible, making it likely that it read לזאת.

⁴⁷ The end of the word is torn off, whilst the letter preceding the hole is illegible. Perhaps it is a ל. But there is no certainty about the other letters either, save the מ. If we could assume that the letters looking like וצ are a clerical error for a מ, then we would have the remainder of [כות]מהמל.

ויבא מן הארץ כחללים
 שדל וימותו שהם תשעים ואיש
 האם שמום לים עובר וי-
 ד רוסו וי-
 וכל הנמצאים מהם
 וזשם וזך על הלג למלחמה וילחם
 וזשם ויכניעו ויהם לפע פסח וי-
 שדל אשר לקח מסמכין ואומד כי רוסו
 השואנ- את ויאמר לו פסח אם בן ק על דומעם
 והלחם ב- אשר עלמחה ב- ואלך משך ואם לא פה
 אמור א- חיה עד תקום תקמתי וילך בגל כוורו
 וילחם על קוסטנטין ארבעה חדשים בים ויפלג שם
 גבוריו כי גרין מקדונים באש וינס ויכלם לשוב אל
 ארצו וילך אל פרס בים ויפל שם הוא ומלמקודו
 אז היו רוסים כמעט תחת ידו קר- הנג
 מ- לאדוני שם ארצו כאשר מצינו בוסתים
 ארקעם ושם ציר הממלכה קור ועתה הנה העולם
 בתוכה אטיר והן מימון לים הבה מחת- ועד
 עברו בו שלוחך לקוסטנטינה וכמדומה את
 הים הגדול מושך ומדינתו רחוקה מן היסודות
 לפים ומאה וששים רים ובין ארצו לקוסטנטינה
 בים תשעה ימים וביבשה שמה ועשרים יום
 וארץ ממעלות אדוני חמשים יום הנה המלחם עמו
 אס'א ופאכ וזבואב וזיבוס וכוורקו ולוונין

²⁷ Supply אנשי קור. ²⁸ Supply כולם.

²⁹ We should expect here וי[כם מכ]ה. I must also remark that the traces after וי look somewhat like ש.

³⁰ See II Chron. 31, 18. ³¹ This word can also be read בחיי.

³² After היה a faint trace of an א is visible. The rest is illegible. Perhaps we had here א[יהבו אז].

³³ The rest is obliterated. Perhaps we should supply here [המלך עד מ]אד.

³⁴ Read [נשב]ע. Perhaps we should read at the end of the line באמונה. Cf. Ps. 89, 50.

³⁵ After the המלך traces of various letters are visible, which suggest supplying [הבית]ה. But they are all doubtful to me.

³⁶ Perhaps we should read the last word [בעז]רו. The other letters are too faint to suggest anything to me.

³⁷ The context would suggest supplying [הרב]הב[ר]. Some trace of a כ at the beginning of the faded place is still to be seen, but it is very doubtful.

³⁸ Supply at the beginning of the line הרשע as above 1. 62.

³⁹ Reading fairly certain, but it gives no sense. Perhaps it means "the Revereer." Perhaps it was המיחד.

⁴⁰ This word can also be read שרי.

⁴¹ The letters following שורשן look somewhat like נו but there is still room for one or two letters.

TRANSLATION*

* * * * *

- 1—Armenia and our ancestors fled from them[for they could not]
 - 2—bear the yoke of the worshipers of idols. And [the princes of Khazaria] received them [for the men of]
 - 3—Khazaria were first without Torah. And [they too] remained without
 - 4—Torah and Scriptures and made marriage with the inhabitants of the land [and mingled with them.]
 - 5—And they learned their deeds and went out with them [to the war continually.]
 - 6—And they became [one] people. Only upon the covenant of circumcision they relied. And [some of them]
 - 7—observed the Sabbath. And there was no king in the land of Khazaria. Only
 - 8—him who won victories in the battle they would appoint over them as general
 - 9—of the army. Now (it happened) at one time when the Jews went forth into the battle with them as
 - 10—was their wont that on that day a Jew proved mighty with his sword and put to flight
 - 11—the enemies who came against Khazaria. Then the people of Khazaria appointed him over them as general
 - 12—of the army in accordance with their ancient custom.
- And such was the state of their affairs for many days;

*The lines preceded by numbers correspond, as far as possible, with the Hebrew lines of the text. Words in square brackets indicate supplied matter, and thus cannot claim certainty and for which the notes to the Hebrew text should be consulted.

- 13—until the Lord had mercy and awakened the heart of the prince to do repentance.
- 14—For his wife, whose name was Serah, turned him and taught him profitably. And he also
- 15—consented, for he was circumcised. But also the father of the young woman, a righteous man in that generation,
- 16—taught him the way of life. And it came to pass that when the kings of Macedon
- 17—and the kings of Arabia heard of these things, they waxed exceeding wroth. And they sent
- 18—messengers to the princes of Khazaria with words of blasphemy against Israel, saying:
- 19—“What mean ye by returning to the belief of the Jews who are subject under
- 20—the hands of all the nations?” And they spake words which are not for us to tell. And they turned the
- 21—heart of the princes to evil. Then said the great prince, the Jew: “To what end,
- 22—increase words? Let there come (men) of the wise men of Israel and of the wise men of Greece,
- 23—and of the wise men of Arabia. And let everyone of them tell before us and before you.
- 24—[the work of his God and we shall see] the end.” And they did so and he sent
- 25—[messengers to the kings of Greece] and to the kings of Arabia. But the wise men of Israel also offered themselves
- 26—[to come to the aid of the men of] Khazaria. Thereupon the Greeks opened with their testimony

- 27—.....and the Jews and the
Arabians began to contradict them. And after this
- 28—[the Arabians bore witness] and the Jews and the
Greeks contradicted them. And then opened
- 29—[the wise men of Israel their testimony] telling from
the days of the creation, until the day when the chil-
dren of Israel came up
- 30—from Egypt, and until they arrived at an inhabited
country. (To the truth of this), the Greeks
- 31—as well as the Arabians bore witness and confirmed it,
but there arose also dissension amongst them.
- 32—Then said the princes of Khazaria, "Behold, there is
a cave in the valley of Tizul תִּזּוּל. Bring forth for us
- 33—the books which are there and explain them to us."
And they did so and went
- 34—into the cave. And behold, there were there Books of
the Law of Moses, and the wise men of Israel ex-
plained them
- 35—in accordance with the words which they spake first.
Then
- 36—Israel, together with the men of Khazaria, returned
in perfect repentance. But also the Jews began
- 37—to come from Bagdad, from Khorasan בּוֹרְסָן and from
the land of Greece and strengthened the hands of the
men of
- 38—the land, and encouraged themselves in the covenant
of the Father of the Multitude. And the men of the
land appointed over them
- 39—one of the wise men as judge. And they call his name
in the tongue of

- 40—Khazaria, Khagan, כֶּחָן. Therefore, the judges who arose after him are called by the name
- 41—Khagan כֶּחָן, even unto this day. As to the great prince of Khazaria, they turned his name into
- 42—Sabriel and they made him king over them. Now they say in our land
- 43—that our ancestors came from the tribe of Simeon, but we are not able to probe
- 44—the truth of the matter. Now the king made peace with our neighbor, the king of the Alani,
- 45—because the kingdom of the Alani is the strongest and the hardest of all the nations that surround us.
- 46—For the wise men said, “Lest when the nations shall rise up to wage war against us
- 47—He also join unto our enemies.” Therefore [he concluded peace with him to help]
- 48—one another in distress. And there was the terror of God [upon the nations which]
- 49—surround us. And they came not against the kingdom of Khazaria. [But in the day of] the king [Benjamin]
- 50—all the nations rose up against [the men of Khazaria] and brought them into straits [according to the counsel]
- 51—of the king of Macedon. And there went to battle the king of Asia [and Turkey]
- 52—..... and Painil פִּינִיל and Macedon. Only the king of the Alani was in support of [Khazaria.]
- 53—For some of them observed the Torah of the Jews. [All] these kings

- 54—waged war against Khazaria. But the king of the Alani went against their land [and smote them with slaughter,] so
- 55—that they could not recover. And the Lord smote them before the king Benjamin. But it happened also in the days of king Aaron
- 56—that the king of the Alani fought against Khazaria, for the king of Greece incited him.
- 57—But Aaron hired against him the king of Turkey [for he was then his friend.] And the king of the
- 58—Alani fell before Aaron who caught him alive. But [the king] honored him [very much] and took
- 59—his daughter as wife for his son Joseph. Thereupon the king of the Alani swore unto him in truth.
- 60—and Aaron the king sent him [to his house]. And, from that day there fell the fear
- 61—of Khazaria upon the nations which surrounded them. And also in the days of my lord, the king Joseph
- 62—..... when there was the persecution in the days of the wicked Romanus.
- 63—[And the matter became known] to my lord he trod down many of the uncircumcised. But Romanus, [the wicked,] also
- 64—sent great gifts to Helgu, the king of Russia, and enticed him
- 65—for his own evil, and he came in the night upon the province of the Sewerians סמבריי and took it by deception.
- 66—For the commander, the head of the princes, was not there. But when the matter became known to Bulshazi

- 67—or Pesah, the Reverer, he marched against the cities
of Romanus in fierce anger and smote
- 68—both man and woman. And he took three cities be-
sides the hamlets
- 69—very many. And from there he marched against
Shorshu and fought against it.
- 70—..... And there came out of
the earth like worms
- 71—..... Israel and there died
ninety men of them
- 72—..... But he made them serve
under tribute and saved
- 73—..... [from] the hands of
Russia. [And he took] all those to be found of them
- 74—..... [sword] and from there
he went out to battle against Helgu and he fought
- 75—..... months and God subdued
him before Pesah and he found
- 76—..... of the plunder which he took from the
Sewerians, but he said, "Romanus
- 77—beguiled me (to do) this." Then Pesah said to him,
"If this be so, march against Romanus
- 78—and fight against him as thou didst fight against me,
and I will depart from thee, but if not, here
- 79—I shall die or live until I shall have taken vengeance,"
And thus he marched against his own will
- 80—and fought against Constantinople four months on
sea. And his mighty men fell
- 81—there. For the Macedonians prevailed over him by
fire. And he fled but was ashamed to return to

- 82—his land. And he went to Persia by the sea and he
fell there, he and all his camp.
- 83—Then the Russian became subdued under the hands of
the Khazar. Behold, I
- 84—make it known to my lord that the name of our land
as we found it in books is
- 85—Arkanus, and the name of the royal city is Khazar,
and the name of the river that passes
- 86—through its midst is Atel אטל and it is south of the
sea that comes from through which
- 87—thy messengers came to Constantinople. And I believe
that
- 88—it starts from the Great Sea. But our province is
distant from that sea
- 89—two thousand and one hundred and sixty *ris*, and be-
tween our land and Constantinople
- 90—is nine days by sea and twenty-eight days by land,
- 91—and the land of the dominion of my lord is fifty days.
Behold, (these are) those who fight against us.
- 92—Asia, Bab al abwab, Zibus, Turkey, and Luznu.

* * * * *